593 necessity be derived from a logical conclusion based on a great many particular instances. Yet these might have explanations other than those we give them. Thus we could attribute the presence of true love or its absence to the effects of causes of which we are unaware. Nevertheless, we cannot keep from presenting below a few facts which will enable us to draw a conclusion that is adequately in accordance with reality.

There is no question that the love found here lacks the purity which it has among certain groups of Europeans or certain other peo-
● [38] ples, especially good Christians. No one is astonished that pagan peoples, practicing their atavistic and degrading customs, have not achieved the general delicacy of sentiment or more especially the moral height of so noble a virtue as has been nourished and developed by centuries of Christian influence.

In addition, the instability of marriage, the possibility of its dissolution, and the presence of polygamy by no means tend to develop the purity of love; on the contrary, they tend to debase it. Finally, [38] the liveliness and sincerity of family affections, which we have described in Article I, naturally result in a reduction of conjugal love -- all the more so since, because of the patriarchal structure of native society, the Nkundó needs his kin more than he needs his wife.

Thus there is much selfishness, which is one of the characteristic signs of moral decadence and little devotion. A wife will seldom remain with a husband who suffers from an incurable illness, is impotent, or has become too poor for her taste. The Nkundó consider this the natural state of affairs and are not at all ashamed to admit it, even in front of a missionary.

593' 593" The same is true of a husband's relationship to his wife. If she has become incapable of fulfilling at least one of the purposes for which he married her, why should he keep her? If she has given him sons, they will want to keep their mother, and their entreaties combined, perhaps, with a feeling of compassion for one he has loved, might persuade him to keep her. Her sons will provide for her subsistence to which their father will make a contribution from time to time, and her daughters will take care of her and prepare her food. But some men will insist on getting rid of this burden in spite of

582 We have spoken of the unproductivity of the bride price.
583x This is a Nkundó notion, and it is accurate only because the old men want to satisfy themselves before their sons. Actually, they could very easily reconcile their desire that the bride price should be productive with the aspirations of the youths, at least in many instances. All they would need to do would be to use the valuables they have received for their sons' benefit by acquiring girls of the same age for them. The productivity of the valuables would not diminish [238] in the least, of course, since the goods would remain in the family. On the contrary, it would be increased because a
[842] greater number of progeny would probably be born. But our natives
● [181] knowledge of physiology does not seem to be sufficiently developed for them to come to this conclusion. And even more probably their egoism has greatly clouded their intelligence and silenced the voice of good sense and fatherly love to make it possible for them to multiply the number of their wives and thus increase the easy satisfaction of their sensuality, augment their wealth, and reinforce their social position. It will be their sons' turn after their death.

561 This situation is aggravated by the fact that, except for the
428 bosólo, the brothers, not the sons, of the deceased inherited the
595x widows, who thus remained in the hands of the old men.
582 Because of their attitudes the old men monopolized most of the women. They established large harems for themselves, so that it was very difficult for the young men to find a woman to marry; they had to consider themselves lucky if their father provided them with a child.

582 Thus it was unheard of that a young man between twenty and
178 thirty years old should marry, except for a few instances where a man acquired a child who was to become his wife after a number of years. Men were usually forty years old or older before they married.

Nowadays the situation has changed entirely; the attitude of the old men favors the young much more and has become almost normal. The great majority of fathers, if they have the means, procure a wife for their sons as soon as the latter are old enough to express a desire for one. This improvement is due to the fact that it has become

602 within a group of close kin, seeing that, from a certain standpoint,
837 property belongs to all the members, each sooner or later receiving
684 or inheriting from the other. But in cases where other sanctions can be imposed, they are considered legitimate. [309]

b) Except in the case of relations between brother and sister-
626 in-law -- within the limits described above -- public opinion is
837 severe in its judgment, even more severe than for ordinary cases of
602 adultery, although because of the more tangible nature of the sanctions imposed against the latter, these seem on the surface to be considered more serious; many natives even have that impression. Or at least that is the first impression that spontaneously comes from their explanations; currently, they stress the indemnity, and in their accounts of ancient proceedings and violent sanctions, they forget the other aspect. Others do not distinguish between the two sides of the problem, or distinguish between them only very poorly. Only in going to the bottom of things do they -- like ourselves -- become aware of the two aspects and the importance of not confusing them.

The leniency we observe in certain cases on the part of the interested parties who have been wronged, and sometimes on the part of public opinion, does not seem to us to have been explained as a leniency based on principle nor as a legitimation of these relations (except in the case of brothers within the limits indicated). They seem rather to spring from the affection they have for the culprit, their sympathy for his condition as a bachelor, a certain community of interests, and finally from an evaluation of certain other elements that may be involved (such as a fundamental jealousy in the case of brothers).

602 The great distinction made by the Nkundó in this realm as
● 111 in others between inferior and superior relatives is based on their conception of authority, which is patriarchal, therefore paternal. What is involved is not so much a fear of power as a reverent awe -- although the first should not be excluded. In their eyes an inferior does not exist for the benefit and advantage of the superior, but the reverse; authority exists for the good of the inferior, who to preserve hierarchy and order must submit to the [310] superior. The superior's duty to help his inferior (in his difficulties, his palavers, his poverty),

602 to be liberal and generous toward him and therefore to make goods
● 141 available to him, to be lenient in matters concerning justice and property and obliging in conjugal matters -- as long as the principle of authority remains secure is based on the same idea. The exploitation of an inferior by his superior is entirely contrary to the basic nature of Nkundó authority, while the reverse is entirely in conformity with it. (1)

> 1. This attitude may account -- at least to some extent -- for the liberties that *the natives readily take with* the European, their superior or master, such as domestic thefts, inappropriate requests, the kind of begging and lack of respect for authority that we are accustomed to seeing, etc.

Article VII. Adultery

937 For the Nkundó, adultery is an illicit union between a man and a married woman. From the moment the ikulá is paid for a woman, any relations with her by a man other than the husband-to-be are considered adulterous.

1. Terminology

There is no exclusive or specific term in Lonkundo by which our word "adultery" may be translated. There are a number of words in the language which are only partially equivalent to it.

1) First of all, the Nkundó speak of bongombe, a term denoting steady and continuous relations with a woman who is a complete stranger, that is, who is not related in any way. The word designates the relationship as well as the persons involved. This type of adultery is also called a wɨsamaka or lisɨmba jɨ njɨsɨmɨ (from the verb ɨsama) -- that is, a secret, as against a true lisɨmbɨ (which will be

586 make it possible for him to recover his claim, he had recourse to the second means:

586 587 b) Reducing his wife to slavery (bonvamó, from the verb nyamola). The husband had the right to use this means immediately, without having first tried the étaka. But such action was not approved of and was undertaken only if the woman's family were themselves exasperated by the endless suits and the continual shame that their unworthy daughter caused them.

[721] The reduction of a woman to slavery usually caused a war, for her clan would not put up with such an insult. In some instances they did not seek revenge, however, either out of fear, because they did not feel in a position to resist, or because they recognized that the husband had good reasons for what he did. [384]

The woman's relatives could subsequently buy her back. (1)

● [181] 1. If the Nkundó sold an Elinga woman into slavery, her people never troubled them with a war. For they did not know how to attack, were not good at marching, were strangers to the forest, and were inferior in military valor. Therefore they were satisfied with buying back their kinswoman.

In some instances, not wanting to be exposed to further palavers or further shame caused by their daughter's continued misconduct after having bought her back, they left her to her fate. Their love for their child and their desire to preserve their honor and good reputation were in conflict, and which of the two sentiments triumphed depended on circumstances of men and things. In such a situation, as with respect to theft and other habits that brought dishonor, it was not rare (nor is it even today) to find that the desire to preserve honor triumphed over affection or financial interests.

[584] Before reducing a wife to slavery, even more than before confining her to the etáka, a man was required to communicate his intentions to the ndonga. Otherwise, the latter would declare war

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots, and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes) which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.
181 A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461 Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence. However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women, and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and vice versa. The work is got done in groups or in family units; where a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.